

Good Templars Hall - Ball Building - Morgan Building
812 Lincoln Way, Auburn
Compiled by Karri R. Samson

The Independent Order of Good Templars was founded in 1851 as part of the Temperance Movement. The Auburn Lodge met in several locations in the early years.

In 1883 they built a lodge at the V intersection of High Street and Railroad Street (now called Lincoln Way). It was formally dedicated by the Grand Templar of the World, George Katzenstien, on March 23, 1883.

One of the early tenants of the Good Templars Hall was the Auburn Library Association.

The *Placer Argus* of August 24, 1889 announced the "formal opening of the Free Reading Room, by the Women's Christian Temperance Union, in the Temple Block (the Good Templars Hall), took place Friday evening, August 16th . The attendance was large, the room very handsomely decorated, and the original bar and bookcases well laden with current reading matter. Short addresses were made by Mrs. C.V. Slade, Pres. of W.C.T.U., Prof. M.W. Ward, A.B. Coffman, W.B. Lardner, and H.H. Richmond. The music, under the direction of Prof. Potter, of the M.E. church, was excellent. Mrs. Lewis has charge of the room at present."

Rhoda C. Lewis's obituary in 1924 stated that "she conducted the first library in Auburn" and "was for many years a member of the W.C.T.U."

Placer Herald. June 28, 1890: "The reception given by the Auburn Library Association at its rooms in the Good Templar building Tuesday evening was enjoyed by a large number of members and friends. In a short time, visitors can read by electric light. The Library has now become one of the permanent institutions of the city and should receive the hearty support of all citizens."

The obituary for Mrs. Achsah Srite in the *Placer Herald* of July 16, 1904 noted that she "at one time lived in Auburn and was in charge of the free library here." *The Placer Argus* of June 2, 1895 notes her leaving her lodging rooms at the Good Templar Hall.

Over the years there were many occupants of the building. In 1884, Mrs. J.N. Lombard was living upstairs. A.M. Pettingill had an ice cream parlor there. In March of 1890, the *Placer Herald* noted that Mrs. Willford had "abandoned her boarding house in the Good Templar building and she and her boarders have taken quarters at the Arlington Hotel." In 1897, the building was sold to "a New York man." This was probably G.W. Daniels, who owned it in 1899.

Later in 1899 William J. Ball bought it. He operated a stationary, music and book store. It came to be known as the Ball Building. In April 1908, Ball sold the property to A. Shadblow.

In November 1907, Auburn Mayor, James W. Morgan, and his brother Tom E. Morgan purchased property on Railroad Street between the east end of the Hink Block and Francis & Johnson Hardware Store from Sarah Dunlap. In late 1908 J.W. Morgan had the building moved to this site, which today is 812 Lincoln Way. This was across the street from his dry goods store.

The first floor of the building housed the Chamber of Commerce, City Trustees, City Clerk and City Marshal. The second floor was the first home of the Tahoe Club. By December 1909, when C.O. Tufts Auburn Studio opened there, it had come to be called the Morgan Building.

Gordon and Quigley opened a men's clothing store in April 1914 in the former Chamber site. Dave Gordon purchased his partner's interest in October 1914. He had his haberdashery here until closing it in September 1919 because of World War I. In 1919 Mr. and Mrs. Frank Berry later opened a restaurant.

In December 1927, Max Strasberg leased the site and opened The U.S. Army and Navy Goods Store. It was later known as Strasberg's Men's Shop. On January 2, 1947, his son Jack took over interest in the store. In October 1960, Jack and Hazel Strasberg sold Strasberg's Men's Shop to A.D. and Bernice Hexom, who leased the building from Jack Strasberg.

After Hexom closed his store, The Fashion Center, a women's clothing store, opened. From 1963 to 1965 rummage sales were periodically held in the site by various organizations. In 1966 it was the Republican headquarters.

The Thread-Needle Shop was opened in November 1966 by Mrs. Mel Scott. Advertisements for it still appeared in March 1971.

Chris Haro came to Auburn in 1965 to operate the State Farm Insurance office. He was originally located in Shepard Square, but, by 1971, he had relocated to 812 Lincoln Way. He operated it for 30 years. Haro was the founder of Grace Crusaders Missionary Book Society. It was a free mail-order lending library of Evangelical Christian books. You could write to Haro at 812 Lincoln Way and books would be mailed to you at no charge. You could keep them for two months then return them and receive more. He was also noted for the cactus display in the front window.

Over the years, several other businesses have occupied the building. Currently, 2020, the building houses Georgetown Trading Company and Bliss Studio and Beauty Lounge.